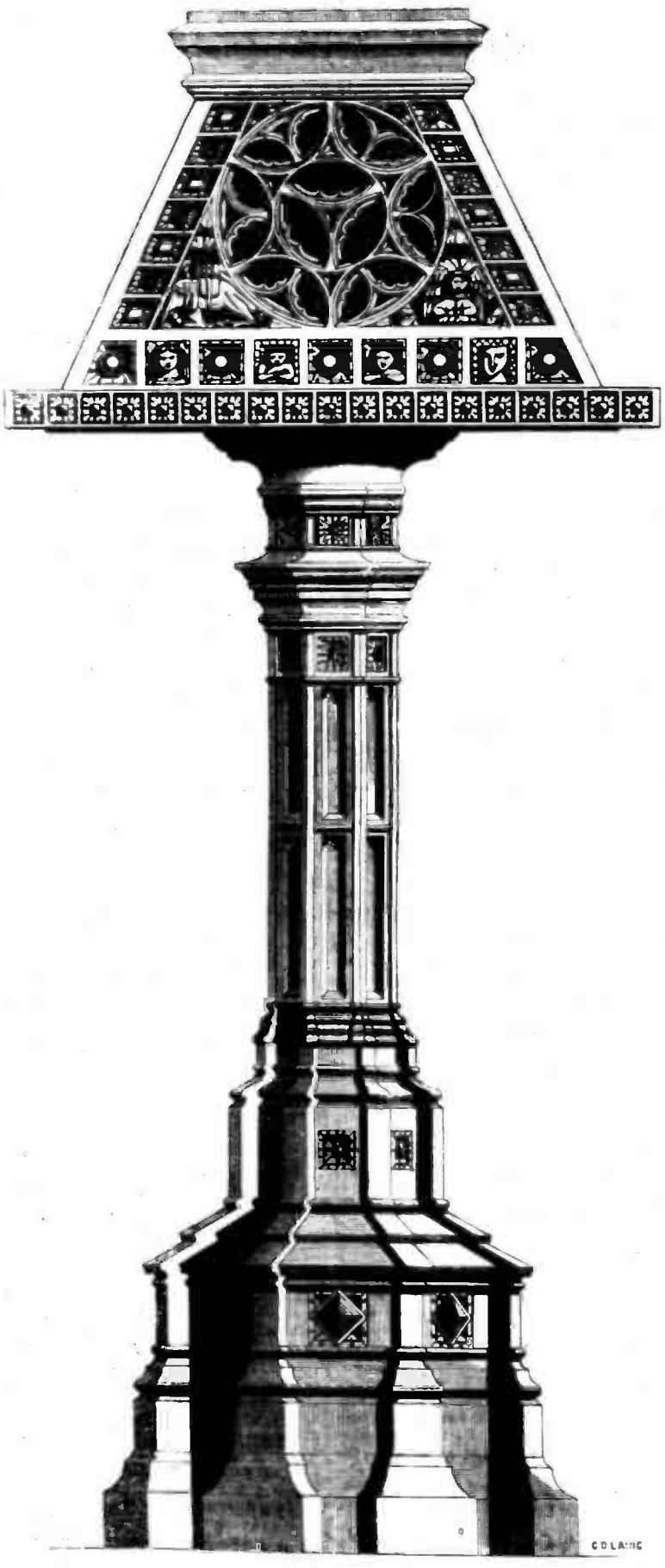
WOOD LETTERN, DETTLING CHURCH, KENT.



at large, would thus be all the sooner provided with sanitary regulations. It was also explained that, to comprise the metropolitan area of drainage and supply of water, it had been found necessary to extend the limits of exclusion from four miles radius round St. Paul's, to ten.

During an incidental discussion on the subject of intramural interments, it was elicited that, while the vested interests of the clergy and others had hitherto prevented the removal of those plague-spots—the churchyards and the burial grounds—from the midst of dense populations, Lord Morpeth intended to follow up the Health of Towns Bill with another for the abolition of interment in towns.

LETTERN, DETTLING CHURCH, KENT.

The use of the ancient Lettern has (with the exception of a few yet in use in some of the cathedrals), been almost entirely superseded by the more modern reading-desk, so that but few good specimens are now to be found; they have rarely been used in this country since the reformation, and then only in cathedrals or college chapels to hold the Bible. The usual place for the lettern was the middle of the choir, the most convenient spot from which to read the lessons; they were sometimes made of stone, marble, or brass, but more generally of wood, and it was the custom of the Roman Catholic church to deck them with hangings, so as to accord with the high altar. The oldest specimen at present known is that at Crowle Church, Worcestershire, which is of the early part of the thirteenth century, and another beautiful specimen may be found at Wenlock, in Shropshire: these are of marble. Brass letterns are to be found in Canterbury cathedral, in many of the college chapels, and in a few parish churches, but they are more rare than those of wood. The common form of a brass lettern is that of an eagle with the wings spread, so as to bear the book. Of wood letterns, examples are to be found in Norwich and Wells cathedrals, and in many parish churches; but none of these are equal to that in Dettling Church: it is made with a desk for a book on four sides (the most common form is that with a desk on two sides only), and is more highly ornamented than any other specimen. The four sides are totally different as to design, but all of equal beauty. There has apparently been a finial at the top, which is now destroyed, and something seems wanting at the base, though altogether it is in very good preservation and free from paint, which may possibly be accounted for from the fact of it having been for a number of years kept in a small closet at the base of the tower, in close companionship with the coals. The stand is 5 feet 3 in. in height. This lettern is now in the north aisle, quite out of view, and I suppose out of favour too, as it is never used. From its beauty, it would be an ornament to any of our cathedrals, where it would be more suitably placed than in Dettling Church, which is without one interesting feature.

Wm. Cayeler.

CARVED IMPOST AT IPSWICH.

Of the many curious examples of decorated corner-posts existing in Ipswich, the most highly enriched is the one here engraved, which forms a portion of the Royal Oak Inn, in Northgate-street. The upper portion represents, on one side, a blacksmith at his forge; and, on the other, a female head,—perhaps one is Vulcan, the other Venus. Beneath the figures is an enriched scroll-ornament, with heads of griffins, &c., in the style of the renaissance. Of the other imposts in Ipswich, the most curious is one in the court-yard of an old mansion in St. Clement's-street, which has a figure of Mars, and another, supposed to represent Queen Elizabeth, but which may be simply a figure of Justice. Another, at the corner of the Half-moon public-house, in Lower Brook-street, represents a fox preaching to some geese, one of which he is eventually carrying off as his prey. All these carvings are of the same period, the sixteenth century; but our readers will remember an example executed probably a century earlier, which we engraved in The Builder, p. 547, vol. iv., and which formed the corner-post of the ancient hostel, known as the New Inn, at Gloucester.

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